#### *Assisi* – Norman MacCaig

The dwarf with his hands on backwards  
sat, slumped like a half-filled sack  
on tiny twisted legs from which  
sawdust might run,  
outside the three tiers of churches built  
in honour of St Francis, brother  
of the poor, talker with birds, over whom  
he had the advantage  
of not being dead yet.  
  
A priest explained  
how clever it was of Giotto  
to make his frescoes tell stories  
that would reveal to the illiterate the goodness  
of God and the suffering  
of His Son. I understood  
the explanation and  
the cleverness.  
  
A rush of tourists, clucking contentedly,  
fluttered after him as he scattered  
the grain of the Word. It was they who had passed  
the ruined temple outside, whose eyes  
wept pus, whose back was higher  
than his head, whose lopsided mouth  
said Grazie in a voice as sweet  
as a child's when she speaks to her mother  
or a bird's when it spoke  
to St Francis.

**Instrument of Assessment**

**Answer all the questions**

1. What is the situation in the poem: what is happening (2)

2. In your own words, explain what the beggar described in lines 1 – 4 looks like. (3)

3. With reference to the text, explain how the poet tries to create sympathy for the beggar in lines 1-4. (4)

4. Looks at lines 7-9. What tone do you detect in these lines? (1)

5. Quote the phrase that shows where the beggar is located, and explain the irony of lines 6-7 (*in honour of St Francis, brother of the poor)* (2)

6. How do these lines help you to understand the poet’s own feelings in the poem? (1)

7. What impression do we get of the priest in lines 10-17. Justify your response with reference to the text. (2)

8. *A rush of tourists, clucking contentedly,*

*fluttered after him as he scattered*

*the grain of the Word*

Explain fully the comparison, and what impression you think it gives of the tourists. (3)

9. MacCaig, in Assisi, is making a statement about the apathy (uncaring or disinterested nature) of society. Quote the phrase from ll 18-27 which you think best sums up this apathy. (1)

10. Identify one area of contrast within the poem, and explain what point MacCaig is trying to make. (2)

Total marks – 21